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ABSTRACT

In May 2000, the New York State Board of Regents adopted amendments to regulations of the state department of education to implement a System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS) to expand on the program of registration review for schools performing below state standards. SASS aligned institutional accountability with the new state assessment program and graduation standards. This report provides an update on the Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) program and an overview of the implementation of SASS. The report summarizes trends and performance data of SURR schools in meeting state standards, and it highlights the efforts the New York Department of Education is making to provide support to SURR and other low-performing schools. The report also examines how state standards are used to trigger various interventions in schools, speculates on how the federal reauthorization of Title I may affect New York State, and suggests the key policy and program implementation areas that will be the focus of school accountability activities during the next school year. The state accountability system has mirrored the movement from competency-based to proficiency-based standards for students. With the exception of grade 8 mathematics, the majority of schools are achieving the state accountability standards. There is a strong correlation between the needs/resource capacities of districts and the ability of their schools to perform at state standards. The number of SURR schools under review for more than 5 years is declining, but there are higher percentages of middle schools and higher percentages of schools outside of New York City being identified for SURR support. The report concludes that New York remains a leader in establishing curriculum standards, assessing the attainment of these standards, reporting results, and holding institutions accountable for the results achieved. (SLD)

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Report on Implementation of a System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS)

James A. Kadamus

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TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: James A. Kadamus

COMMITTEE: Full Board
TITLE OF ITEM: Report on Implementation of a System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS)
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SUMMARY:

Since 1989, the key school accountability initiative of the State Education Department has been to provide support to those schools that have been placed under registration review because they are performing far below State standards and are most in need of improvement. In May 2000, the Board of Regents adopted amendments to Commissioner's Regulations to implement a System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS), which expanded upon the Department's program of registration review. SASS aligned institutional accountability with the new State assessment program and graduation standards, provided for the establishment of Adequate Yearly Progress targets so that schools could demonstrate the progress they were making towards State standards, and further integrated the State and Federal accountability programs. SASS also extended accountability to schools and programs for which there was previously no State accountability system. In addition, SASS established a mechanism by which schools could be determined to be in need of improvement or making rapid progress based upon trends in performance over time.

The following report provides an update on the Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) program as well as an overview of the implementation of SASS. Information is provided on trends and results in SURR schools as well as an analysis of how the reauthorization of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) may affect the current State accountability program. Attachments to the report provide further detail regarding the State standards, required school plans, district level accountability and efforts to provide accountability for special programs and populations. The report concludes by identifying policy issues that will require attention during the coming school year.

Implementation of a System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS)

Executive Summary

The following report provides an update on the SURR program as well as an overview of the State's System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS). The report summarizes trends and performance data of SURR schools in meeting State standards and highlights the efforts the Department is making to provide support to SURR and other low-performing schools. The report also explains how State standards are used to trigger various interventions in schools, speculates on how the Federal reauthorization of Title I may affect New York State, and suggests the key policy and program implementation areas that will be the focus of school accountability activities during the next school year.

The report contains the following key findings and observations:

- The State accountability system for schools has mirrored the movement from competency-based to proficiency-based standards for students.
- With the exception of grade 8 mathematics, the majority of schools are achieving the State accountability standards. While high schools have generally been most successful at meeting the accountability standards, this may change as the new graduation requirements are phased in. There is a strong correlation between the need/resource capacity of districts and the ability of their schools to perform at State standards.
- Among recent trends in SURR schools are higher percentages of middle schools and higher percentages of schools outside of New York City being identified. The number of SURR schools that are under review for more than five years is declining as is the number of students attending SURR schools.
- Preliminary results from the grade 4 English language arts (ELA) examination for 2001 show that SURR schools made strong gains, but still perform at low levels. Overall, over the past two years, there has been a decline in the number of schools performing at very low levels on the grade 4 ELA examination.
- In addition to the Schools Under Registration Review program, Local Assistance Plans, School Improvement and Corrective Action Plans are some of the strategies by which the Department seeks to improve performance in schools and districts that are performing below standards.
- The Department uses a variety of strategies to support low-performing schools, including the direct assignment of staff to work in SURR schools and the provision of extensive professional development to administrators, teachers, and parents in SURR schools. Recently, the Department created Regional Support Centers to focus attention on those schools that are performing just above the level for identification as possible SURR schools.

- Reauthorization of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act will have implications for New York State's accountability system. One key issue will be how to implement the mandate for testing of all students in grades 3–8 and whether to move to a "value added" system of school accountability.

The report concludes that New York remains a leader in the nation in establishing curriculum standards, assessing attainment of these standards, reporting results to the public, and holding institutions accountable for the results achieved by those for which they are responsible. In the 2001 edition of Quality Counts, published by *Education Week*, New York was one of only two states to receive an "A" grade for its standards, assessment and accountability system. A strong accountability system coupled with the resources to address identified needs will remain for the foreseeable future a cornerstone of the Regents dual efforts to improve student performance and to close the gap in student achievement.

Implementation of a System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS)

I. Introduction

Goal 2 of *Leadership and Learning*, the strategic plan of the Board of Regents, is that "All educational institutions will meet Regents high performance standards." While the Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) Program is the most visible manifestation of the Department's efforts to ensure that schools are able to meet performance standards, it is just one component of a much broader set of strategies. These strategies seek to carry out the Regents desire for appropriate accountability mechanisms to be in place to measure the performance of every student and each institution in our State. Collectively, these improvement efforts involve over 1,600 schools and the vast majority of districts in the State.

The following report provides an overview of the State's System of Accountability for Student Success (SASS). The report summarizes the standards that are used to measure performance, explains how these measures are used to trigger various interventions in schools and districts, provides information on how schools have performed in relation to accountability standards, analyzes trends and performance data in SURR schools, highlights the efforts the Department is making to provide support to SURR and other low-performing schools, speculates on how the Federal reauthorization of Title I may affect New York State, and suggests the key policy and program implementation areas that will be the focus of school accountability activities during the next school year.

II. State Standards

During the past decade, the Board of Regents has moved from a set of standards and assessments designed to determine whether students demonstrate minimum competency in selected subject areas to a new set of curriculum standards and assessments that require students to demonstrate proficiency in core academic subjects. This shift is designed to ensure that our State's high school graduates are well-prepared for postsecondary education or gainful employment. The State accountability system for schools has mirrored this movement from competency-based to proficiency-based standards.

The System of Accountability for Student Success, adopted by the Regents in May 2000, establishes State standards for schools. At the elementary and middle school levels, these standards are based primarily upon State English language arts and mathematics assessments and at the high school level upon the English language arts and mathematics graduation assessment requirements as well as the annual high school dropout rate. The SASS standards denote acceptable school performance on these measures. For each relevant State standard, a school will meet the standard, be below the standard or be farthest from the standard. Schools that are farthest from State standards are potential SURR schools. Schools that are below State standards can be designated as Schools in Need of Improvement or, in the case of Title I schools,

as Corrective Action Schools, if they fail within specified periods of time to either achieve the State standards or demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress.

III. School Performance in Relation to State Standards

The 1999-2000 school year was the first in which the elementary and middle school Performance Index and the annual high school cohort were used to determine which school achieved State standards in English language arts and mathematics. To achieve the State standard in grades 4 and 8 English language arts and mathematics, a school was required to have a Performance Index of 140 or higher. At the high school level, schools were required to demonstrate that 90 percent of students met the graduation assessment requirements in English language arts and mathematics and the annual dropout rate was less than five percent.

The table below shows in rank order how successful schools were in relation to the State standards:

Percentage of Public Schools Meeting State Standards 1999-2000

Standard	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools Meeting Standard
Dropout Rate	905	88%
Grade 4 Math	2,265	78%
High School Math	905	78%
High School ELA	905	75%
Grade 4 ELA	2,265	71%
Grade 8 ELA	1,064	57%
Grade 8 Math	1,064	39%

In general, the highest percentages of schools meeting the State standards were at the secondary level and the lowest percentages were at the middle school level. In fact, the only criterion on which fewer than half the schools met the State standard was grade 8 mathematics. Because of changes to the definition of the cohort, new guidelines regarding the reporting of dropouts, and the phase-in of the new graduation assessment requirements in mathematics, it is possible that the relatively high number of high schools meeting the State standards will decline in future years.

There is a significant correlation between the Need/Resource Capacity category of a school and the likelihood that the school will meet State standards. For example, while 100 percent of schools in Low Need/Resource Capacity districts met the State standards in grade 4 ELA and in mathematics, only 26 percent of schools in Large City Districts met the standard in grade 4 ELA and only 36 percent in grade 4 mathematics.

Preliminary results on the grade 4 ELA test administered in 2001 show that the percentage of schools that achieved the State standard of a Performance Index of 140 increased slightly from 71 percent to 72 percent. More dramatic increases occurred in New York City schools where the percent of schools meeting the standard increased from 31 percent to 36 percent.

IV. Trends In Schools Under Registration Review

The Schools Under Registration Review Program is one of the key mechanisms by which the Board of Regents seeks to close the gap in student performance. The registration review process identifies schools that are farthest from State standards and most in need of improvement and assists those schools and the districts in which they are located to develop and implement strategies to produce measurable improvements in student academic results.

When schools are placed under registration review, an external team of experts conducts a resource, planning, and program audit of the school. These teams almost invariably find that newly identified SURR schools possess a combination of characteristics, such as ineffective instructional methods, inadequate planning, and many inexperienced and uncertified teachers, that hinder teaching and learning. The presence of any one or two of these characteristics would be a serious impediment to providing students with a quality education. But their combined effect is debilitating, particularly in schools that serve primarily low-income, urban children. The table below lists the 10 most frequently cited factors for low-performance in schools that were placed under registration review during the 1999-2000 school year:

Factors Affecting School Performance	Percentage of Schools Affected
Ineffective Instructional Methods	88%
Inadequate Planning	79%
Insufficient Supplies and Materials	79%
Many Uncertified Teachers	75%
Inadequate Instructional Leadership	75%
Inadequate Communication	75%
Assessment Data Not Used Appropriately	71%
Many Inexperienced Teachers	71%
Low Academic Standards	71%
Curriculum Deficiencies	63%

These factors underscore the need for comprehensive plans developed by the school and supported by the district to address the many factors that contribute to schools being placed under review.

A number of trends were observed in SURR schools during the past two years:

- The percentage of New York City schools that were identified as SURR schools declined relative to the percentage of Upstate schools identified. From the 1989-1990 school year through the 1998-99 school year, more than 90 percent of schools identified as SURR were located in New York City. During the past two school years, this percentage has dropped to fewer than 70 percent.
- A disproportionate percentage of middle schools have been identified as SURR during the past two years. Between 1989-1990, middle schools represented 22 percent of the total number of SURR schools identified, slightly less than their proportion of schools statewide. During the past two years, this percentage has

doubled to 44 percent. These figures underscore the need for an initiative to address middle-level education.

- Although the total number of SURR schools has remained fairly constant, the number of students in SURR schools has declined. For example, in 1996-97, the number of Schools Under Registration Review, including campus schools, was 99, and there were 98,043 students enrolled in these schools. During the 1999-2000 school year, the number of schools, including campus schools, remained at 99, but the number of enrolled students declined to 78,166. This decline may be attributed in part to the fact that a large number of SURR schools were in the process of phasing out and, as a result, their enrollments have been reduced substantially.
- Because for the past several years the Department has been moving expeditiously to work with school districts to close SURR schools that do not show acceptable progress towards meeting their SURR targets, there has been a significant decline in the number of SURR schools that have been under registration review for more than five years. On July 1, 1999, there were 25 SURR schools that had been under review for more than five years. As of July 1, 2001, that number has been reduced to 11.
- As a result of an agreement reached in response to a lawsuit between the Commissioner and the New York City Board of Education, there has been a large increase in the percentage of certified teachers employed in New York City SURR schools. Between September 2000 and March 23, 2001, the New York City Board of Education placed 1,318 certified teachers in SURR schools. Of these certified teachers, 535 transferred from within the New York City public school system in response to new financial incentives. The other 783 teachers were newly placed certified teachers from outside the New York City school system. As of March 30, 2001, there remained 842 uncertified teachers serving in SURR schools. Those teachers who by September 2001 have not received permanent certification or enrolled in an alternative certification program and received Transactional B Certification will not be permitted to work in SURR schools next school year.

V. Performance in SURR Schools

Preliminary analysis of grade 4 ELA results for the 2000-2001 school year shows a widespread pattern of improvement in the performance of SURR schools. The chart below compares the performance of SURR schools on the grade 4 ELA examination to all schools in New York City and all schools in New York State:

Performance of SURR Schools vs. New York City and New York State Public Schools

2001 Preliminary Grade 4 English Language Arts Performance Index Results

	New York City	Rest of State	Total State	SURR Schools	Former SURR Schools
Number of Schools	679	1,572	2,251	58	70
Performance Index	126	164	153	95	104
Change from 2000 to 2001	+5	+1	+2	+11	+5
Percent of Schools Showing Gains	63%	53%	56%	77%	59%

Notes: Preliminary Performance Index results do not include the performance of English language learners who took an alternative assessment. For New York City, Rest of State, and Total State, only the performance of schools in which 20 or more students were tested was included. The Performance Index and Change from 2000 to 2001 calculations represent the average of all schools for that group.

Observations:

- While there was only a small positive change on the Performance Index in schools outside of New York City, there was significant positive change for New York City schools, former SURR schools, and current SURR schools.
- Current SURR schools showed the biggest gains of any group of schools analyzed. Current SURR schools made more than twice the gains of former SURR schools and New York City schools and more than five times the gains of State public schools.
- While the majority of schools in all categories showed improvement, more than three out of four SURR schools improved their performance on the grade 4 ELA between 2000 and 2001.
- Overall, the performance of SURR schools remains low. There remains a large gap between the average performance of SURR schools, which is 95, and the State standard of 140.

The improvement in SURR schools reflects an overall improvement in performance among the lowest performing schools in the State. As the table below shows, the number of schools farthest from State standards is declining even as this standard becomes more rigorous:

Schools Farthest from State Standards in Grade 4 ELA:
2001 vs. 2000

Number of Schools with PI below 75 in 2000	Number of Schools with PI below 78 in 2000	Number of Schools with PI below 75 in 2001	Number of Schools with PI below 78 in 2001
43	54	25	32

Notes: The cutoff for farthest from State standards in 2000 was a PI of 75 for grade 4 ELA. The preliminary cutoff for 2001 is expected to rise to 78. Numbers in table include only schools with 20 or more students tested.

Observations:

- There was more than a 40 percent decline in the percentage of schools performing below 75 and below 78 on the Performance Index.
- Even if the cutpoint for farthest from State standards is raised three points between 2000 and 2001, the preliminary number of schools farthest from State standards will decline by more than 25 percent.

Another example of this trend of "improvement from the bottom" can be seen in the performance of New York City SURR schools on the grade 4 ELA test. The table below shows the percentage of students performing at Level 1 and at or above Level 3 in New York City SURR schools for the past three years:

Change in Percent of Students at Level 1 and Levels 3 and 4
in New York City SURR Schools 1999 to 2001

Levels	1999 Administration	2000 Administration	2001 Administration	Change from 1999 to 2001
Percent of Students at Level 1	42.1	36.7	30.9	-11.2
Percent of Students at Levels 3 and 4	12.3	19.2	23.3	+11.0

Notes: Includes the performance of general education students, special education students, and English language learners.

Observations:

- During the past two years, the percentage of students in SURR schools performing at Level 1 has declined by more than a quarter, while the percentage of students performing at Levels 3 and 4 has increased by almost 90 percent.
- These changes are particularly impressive since those SURR schools that make the most gains are removed from registration review and are not included in these results.

As a result of this performance, the majority of SURR schools achieved the performance targets established for the school by the Commissioner:

SURR Schools Meeting Grade 4 ELA Minimum Standards and Performance Targets

Performance	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Below Minimum Standard	10	20.4%
Meeting Minimum Standard	9	18.4%
Meeting Performance Target	30	61.2%

Decisions about the registration review status of these schools will be made in the fall after these results are finalized and other State and local assessment data become available. Taken together, the results presented in this section demonstrate that, while the overall trend in SURR school performance is one of improvement, the overall level of performance remains low and must be further increased.

VI. Other School Accountability Designations and Implications

One purpose of a school accountability system is to redirect assistance and resources to those schools that need additional assistance to meet State standards. Commissioner's Regulations and Federal law provide the framework for designating the performance of schools on selected measures and using those designations to determine the remedial actions that must be taken to improve performance in a school.

Local Assistance Plan Schools (1,600) and Adequate Yearly Progress Targets

Each year the Commissioner reviews the performance of schools in the State to determine whether a school has met all applicable standards, is below one or more standards, or is farthest from meeting one or more standards.

Two actions occur when a school performs below one or more State standards. First, the district in which the school is located must develop a Local Assistance Plan (LAP) for the school. The Local Assistance Plan specifies how a district will modify instructional programs and redirect resources to assist the school to meet State standards. The plan is developed by the superintendent in consultation with the school community and must be adopted by the board of education by January 15. The LAP must specify:

- the activities the district will implement to raise performance in the areas below State standards;
- the process by which the plan was developed in accordance with the district's Section 100.11 shared decision making plan;
- the actions to be taken to raise students' level of achievement;
- the resources that the district will provide to the school to implement the plan;
- the professional development activities that will support the plan; and
- the timeline for implementation of the plan.

In many districts, the Local Assistance Plan is not a stand-alone document but is integrated into a Comprehensive District Education Plan.

Schools for which Local Assistance Plans have been developed represented the broadest category of schools for which the Department requires efforts at improvement. While many of these schools were able to meet State standards when such standards were based on minimum competency, they now need additional assistance to ensure that sufficient percentages of their student population achieve proficiency in English language arts and mathematics.

For the 2000-2001 school year, out of 4,234 elementary, middle, and secondary schools in the State that participated in SASS, districts were required to develop Local Assistance Plans for 39 percent of these schools, or slightly more than 1,600 schools.

In addition to the requirement that the district develop a LAP for each school below a State standard, beginning with 1999-2000 school year results, the Commissioner establishes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets for each school below a State standard. These targets are designed to enable schools to demonstrate that they are reducing the gap between the school's current performance and the State standard. For elementary and middle schools, these targets are set in three-year increments during which a school is expected to close the gap between its current performance and the State standard by 15 percent each year. For high schools, the goal for the 2000-2001 school year is to show improvement over prior-year performance. In subsequent years, a gap reduction formula similar to the one used for elementary and middle schools will be employed to calculate high school AYPs. Adequate Yearly Progress targets are used to determine whether schools have made rapid progress and should receive recognition or are failing to make sufficient progress and need to develop improvement plans or be supported by district Corrective Action Plans.

Title I Schools in Need of Improvement (469 Schools)

Schools in Need of Improvement are those schools that perform below State standards and subsequently fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years. Prior to the adoption of the SASS regulation in May 2000, only Title I schools had adequate yearly progress targets and were subject to identification as Schools in Need of Improvement. With the adoption of the May 2000 regulations, all schools in the State, both Title I and non-Title I, are now subject to this provision. During the 2000-2001 school, there were 50 Title I schools outside of New York City and 419 in New York City identified as in need of improvement. When a school is identified as in need of improvement, the school must conduct a needs assessment and develop a plan to improve educational performance. Non-Title I schools will be identified for the first time as Schools in Need of Improvement following the 2001-2002 school year.

Title I Corrective Action Schools (165 Schools)

The Federal statute also requires a second level of accountability for schools identified in need of improvement if they fail to make adequate yearly progress two out of the next three years following identification as a School in Need of Improvement. Title I schools that fail to achieve this level of progress are designated as Corrective Action Schools. When a school is placed in corrective action, the school district must

take at least one of several prescribed corrective actions, which can range from decreasing decision making at the school, to withholding funds, to reconstituting the school staff. During the 2000-2001 school year, there were 26 schools outside of New York City and 139 in New York City in corrective action. In addition, any of the 114 schools that were under registration review during the 2000-2001 school year and which participated in Title I were deemed to be Corrective Action Schools. Because of the Federal expectation that significant intervention will occur in these schools and the fact that they have a history of failing to make progress towards meeting State standards, Title I Corrective Action Schools are the Department's second priority after SURR schools.

Title I School Choice Requirement

A new requirement became effective this year that requires a district to implement a program of public school choice for all Title I Schools in Need of Improvement or Corrective Action Schools. This means that all students in these schools must be given the opportunity to transfer to another public school in the district, including a charter school, that is not in need of school improvement or corrective action. A few exceptions apply, namely, districts where there is only one building per grade span or where all schools are in need of improvement or corrective action. If all students cannot be accommodated, the district must have an equitable method, such as a lottery, to select students for the seats available in schools receiving transfers. A district may choose to apply for additional School Improvement and Choice funding to help in carrying out these Federal responsibilities.

VII. Efforts to Support Low-Performing Schools

The Department has long worked collaboratively with school districts to ensure additional support to Schools Under Registration Review. Each SURR school is visited in its initial year of identification by an external team of experts and subsequently by SED teams. Each school is assigned an SED liaison who coordinates technical assistance to the school. Schools and districts receive additional funds to support planning and implementation of improvement plans. The Department works with various affiliated networks, such as the Teacher Centers, to provide support for SURR schools, and directly provides professional development to teachers, administrators, and parents through such efforts as its acclaimed Reading and Math Institutes, School Library Media workshops, and Parents as Curriculum Partners training. The Department's Harvard Leadership Institute Programs and Principal Leadership Institutes are designed to build the capacity of the administrators at SURR schools to serve as instructional leaders. SED has engaged the services of content standards and assessment consultants to work in selected intermediate, middle and junior high schools that are under registration review. These consultants provide professional development in research-based reading and mathematics programs; coach and model effective in-class instructional strategies; and assist school staff in understanding how to align curriculum, instruction and assessment with the State's reading and mathematics standards.

School districts have leveraged the Department's resources by sponsoring their own school improvement initiatives. In New York City, for example, the Chancellor has created the Chancellor's District to provide intensive support and oversight to those SURR schools with the greatest needs. Schools in the Chancellor's District receive, on average, an infusion of more than $1 million annually in additional resources. Among the key elements of the Chancellor's District model are extensive staff development opportunities, reduced class sizes and an extended school day.

While this "school-by-school" reform model has had much success, it has not been implemented as widely as it is needed. There are many schools in the State that are performing slightly above the cutpoint for SURR designation, but are schools that need this type of support.

To address this issue, the Department has established a new Regional School Support Center (RSSC) network, with a Center located in each Joint Management Team (JMT) region. The New York City RSSC is operated through the Teacher Center; the nine remaining Centers are operated through BOCES, with allocations ranging from $473,775 to $1 million. For 2000-01 and 2001-02, annual allocations of $5.8 million have been established for this initiative.

Each of the Centers is staffed with a planning specialist, an instructional specialist and a special education specialist. (Staffing in the Centers ranges from three to seven professional staff.) An Executive Committee composed of the District Superintendents in the region, a representative from a higher education institution, the superintendent of any Big 4 school district in the region, and practicing teachers, establishes the priorities for each Center.

The RSSC specialists use data/research approaches to work in partnership with local school members to agree upon target areas, the root causes for current performance and needed interventions. By the same token, the RSSC specialists will work with other regional partners such as Mental Health agencies, Teacher Centers, Special Education Training and Resource Centers, Institutions of Higher Education and others to strategically identify the various interventions needed in each targeted school and district. Information regarding the schools/districts "targeted" by the RSSC will be periodically submitted to the Department in standardized status report formats.

VIII. Implications of Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Both Houses of Congress have passed bills reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. As of June 26, 2001, these bills were in conference committee. Although the final bill was not available at the time of this report, when passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President, the legislation will have profound effects on State accountability systems across the country, including New York State. Both bills have proposed similar requirements for school accountability, with variations in timelines for implementation of various sections of the law and other slight modifications or additions.

The following are key provisions that will affect accountability in New York State:

- ✓ The performance of schools, districts, and states will be measured not only on the general performance of students, but also on the performance of separate disaggregated subpopulations: gender, poverty, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, major racial/ethnic groups and migrant status.

- ✓ Accountability under the proposed Federal statute would require additional testing in ELA and mathematics at grades three, five, six, and seven.

- ✓ Stronger accountability provisions will be put in place against schools, districts and state education agencies if AYP targets are not met. A state could lose anywhere from 30 to 70 percent of its administrative funds for failing to achieve performance targets.

- ✓ A second level of accountability has been added so that schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress the year following corrective action must implement one of three alternate governance arrangements: (a) reopen as a charter school; (b) replacement of the principal and most of the school staff; or (c) contract with a not-for-profit or a for-profit entity to operate the school.

- ✓ School report cards must be expanded to include such additional information as graduation rates, participation in Advanced Placement examinations, and teacher qualifications.

These changes will require the Board of Regents to make policy decisions regarding the State's learning standards, and assessment and accountability programs. Foremost among these questions will be whether New York State will develop statewide assessments in grades 3 to 8 in ELA and mathematics or rely upon a system of State and local assessment, if such an option is permitted by the final version of the law. The implementation of a requirement for testing in grades 3 to 8 also raises the question of whether New York State should adopt or integrate "value added" measures into its accountability programs. The more rigorous timeframes and consequences associated with failure to show improvement have implications for both resource allocation and goal setting. While SASS offers a good framework for addressing these accountability issues, further refinement and modification will be required to implement all of the anticipated provisions contained in the Federal reauthorization.

IX. Key Accountability Issues for the 2001-2002 School Year

The State's school accountability system remains a work in progress, continually being adjusted to improve current practice and to ensure future alignment with Regents policy and regulatory and statutory requirements. Among the key policy and implementation issues regarding accountability that will need to be addressed during the coming school year are the following:

- Adopt a policy framework for how the State will meet the new accountability requirements contained in the ESEA reauthorization.
- Adopt recommendations for Early Elementary Education Program Accountability.
- Develop strategies to improve data collection, including the implementation of a unique student record system, and to ensure the integrity of the State test administration.
- Continue development of new State assessments, such as one for English language learners.
- Implement new school accountability provisions, such as GED program accountability and identification of schools as rapidly improving.

X. Conclusion

New York continues to be recognized as a leader in the nation in establishing curriculum standards, assessing attainment of these standards, reporting results to the public, and holding institutions accountable for the results achieved by those for which they are responsible. In the 2001 Edition of Quality Counts, published by *Education Week*, New York was one of only two states to receive an "A" grade for its standards, assessment and accountability system. New York's system is not intended to rate or rank schools or hold them up to public derision. Nor is it a system that seeks to impose intrusive or draconian interventions upon a school or district. Instead the New York system is intended to help policymakers determine how well schools and districts are performing in relation to preparing students to meet standards in key subject areas and then to provide assistance and support to those with the greatest need. The focus is always on helping schools and districts to help themselves, with the recognition that the continued failure to provide adequate educational opportunities to students is unacceptable and must be remedied.

The system that New York has put in place has a record of success. More than three percent of students in the State attend schools that had formerly been under registration review. Many more attend schools that are participating in one of the Department's improvement initiatives. A strong accountability system coupled with the resources to address identified needs will remain for the foreseeable future a cornerstone of the Regents dual efforts to improve student performance and to close the gap in student achievement.

Attachment A: Overview of State Standards

Standards for Elementary and Middle Schools

In October 2000, the Commissioner established the State standards for elementary and middle levels for the 2000-2001 through 2002-2003 school years. Each fall, the Commissioner will announce the State standard for one additional school year, so that schools will know what the State standard is for the next three consecutive school years.

The table below provides the State standards for elementary- and middle-level English language arts and mathematics based on the new Performance Index.

School Year	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Performance Index	140	145	150

The Performance Index evaluates a school both in terms of students demonstrating some of the learning standards (Level 2) and students demonstrating all of the learning standards (Levels 3 and 4) in English language arts and mathematics. The Regents long-term goal is that 90 percent of students will achieve at Level 3 or above, equivalent to a Performance Index of 180.

The Performance Index is calculated based upon the percentage of full-year tested students at Levels 2 and above and the percentage at Levels 3 and above on each of the elementary- and middle-level assessments in English language arts and mathematics. A school in which all students perform at or above Level 3 will have a Performance Index of 200; a school in which all students perform at Level 2 will have a Performance Index of 100; and a school in which all students perform at Level 1 will have a Performance Index of 0. The test results for LEP/ELL using approved alternative assessments are included in the calculation of the Performance Index.

The key feature of the Performance Index is that over time it requires schools to have greater percentages of students demonstrating proficiency in the standards (i.e., performance at or above Level 3) in order for the school to be designated as meeting standards.

High School Standards

Commissioner's Regulations establish that the State standard for high schools will be for 90 percent of the annual high school cohort to meet the graduation assessment requirements in English language arts and mathematics and that the annual dropout rate will be less than five percent.

For the 1999-2000 school year, the high school cohort consisted of those students who first entered grade 9 in 1996. General education students in the 1996 cohort met their graduation requirements in English if they scored 55 on the Regents English examination or an approved alternative. They could meet the graduation requirement in mathematics by passing the Regents Competency Test (RCT) in mathematics or by scoring 55 or higher on a Regents examination in mathematics. Students with disabilities and selected students with Section 504 accommodations could meet their requirement in English or mathematics by passing the Regents Competency Tests in those subjects by scoring 55 or higher on the Regents. For the 1997 cohort, the passing of the RCT in mathematics will no longer be accepted as a means for general education students to meet the mathematics graduation assessment requirement.

Although the standard that 90 percent of students achieve the graduation assessment requirements in English language arts and mathematics remains fixed, the rigor of the standards increases as the graduation assessment requirements are raised from achieving a passing score on the RCT to achieving a 55 on the Regents examinations, to achieving a score of 65 on the Regents examinations.

Attachment B: Required School Plans

Plan	Required By	Required For	Description	Developed By
Local Assistance Plans (App. 1,600 schools)	Part 100.2(m) of Commissioner's Regulations	Any school performing below one or more State standards	A plan developed by the district to provide additional resources, assistance, and/or oversight to schools performing below a State standard	Superintendent, in consultation with school community, pursuant to Section 100.11 of Commissioner's Regulations and adopted by Board of Education
School Improvement Plans (469 Schools)	IASA, Title I, Section 1116 and Part 100.2(p) of Commissioner's Regulations	Any school performing below one or more State standards that fails to make Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years	A school plan to improve student performance in areas where school is below standards	The school community and approved by the Board of Education
Title I Corrective Action Plans (140 Schools)	IASA, Title I	Any Title I school identified for School Improvement that fails to make Adequate Yearly Progress in two out of three years following identification	A plan developed by the district that includes such actions as: withhold school funds; enter into interagency collaborations to provide additional resources; make alternative governance arrangements; reconstitute the school staff; authorize students to	District and approved by SED

Plan	Required By	Required For	Description	Developed By
			transfer; implement opportunity to learn standards; revoke authority to operate a school-wide program; Decrease decision making at the school	
SURR Comprehensive Education Plans (113 Schools)	Part 100.2(p) of Commissioner's Regulations	Schools Under Registration Review	The Comprehensive Education Plan is intended to allow School Leadership Teams to assess the effectiveness of the instructional programs, discuss proposed alternatives, develop goals and objectives, and create actions that will translate into observable, effective strategies to improve student achievement	School Leadership Team with approval by the district and SED
SURR Corrective Action Plans (113 Schools)	Part 100.2(p) of Commissioner's Regulations	Schools Under Registration Review	The purposes of a Corrective Action Plan are to: analyze why existing school improvement efforts have not resulted in the school meeting its performance targets for student results;	Superintendent with approval by district and SED

Plan	Required By	Required For	Description	Developed By
			identify barriers to improvement that are beyond the authority or capacity of the school community to address; and guide the development of a district initiative to address these barriers and support the school's revised school improvement strategy	

Notes: Schools for which Local Assistance Plans are required may also be required to have School Improvement Plans, Title I or SURR Corrective Action Plans, or Comprehensive Education Plans. Title I SURR schools are deemed to be in Title I Corrective Action. The SURR Corrective Action Plan also serves in that case as the Title I Corrective Action Plan.

Attachment C: District Level Accountability

Although the basic unit of accountability in New York State is the school, the Department also has initiatives that focus on district performance.

VESID Quality Assurance

In 1995, the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), in conjunction with a statewide Special Education Quality Assurance Advisory Group, significantly redesigned the process and format of public and private sector compliance monitoring. A system that focused upon procedural compliance was altered to focus on program effectiveness and student results. The Special Education Quality Assurance review process now includes a range of levels of involvement with a district, including a collaborative review as one option. The primary goal of the collaborative review process is to make programs more effective and to impact upon outcomes for students.

VESID's Quality Assurance review process is based on key performance indicators (KPI) that include the following:

- Percentage of students with disabilities participating and percentage scoring at or above Level 3 on grade 4 ELA exam
- Percentage of students with disabilities participating and percentage scoring at or above Level 3 on grade 8 ELA exam
- Percentage of students with disabilities participating and percentage scoring at or above Level 3 on grade 4 mathematics exam
- Percentage of students with disabilities participating and percentage scoring at or above Level 3 on grade 8 mathematics exam
- Participation rate and passing score on Regents English exam
- Participation rate and passing score on Regents mathematics exam
- Percentage earning a high school diploma
- Dropout incidence
- Classification rate, including overrepresentation of minorities
- Integration in regular education classes, including underrepresentation of minorities
- Placement in separate settings, including overrepresentation of minorities
- Percentage of students with disabilities who have post-school plans
- Students with disabilities' transition to postsecondary education and employment at the same rate as nondisabled peers

A district's performance on these various measures is one of the factors that is used to determine the intensity of the Quality Assurance Review with which a district will be involved.

In addition to the Department using KPIs to determine the intensity of program review, Chapter 405 of the Laws of 1999 requires districts to be notified if their performance on certain KPIs was of concern. The 364 districts so identified will be required to participate in different levels of corrective action and training and are designated as Targeted Districts, Regional Training Districts or Self-Review Districts. All such districts must incorporate strategies for addressing identified issues into their Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) plans.

KPI data were used in setting benchmarks and goals for each BOCES region as they developed their plans designed to reduce the numbers of students with disabilities placed in segregated educational settings. These data also assist VESID in determining priority areas for technical assistance and discretionary funding and are used by Regional Support Centers to target districts for service.

Title I District Accountability

The Federal Title I statute requires states to identify Title I districts (those receiving Title I funds) in need of improvement based on failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years following a baseline year (first year below State standards). For spring 2000, New York State has established a new procedure for identifying districts in need of Improvement using the new State assessments. The new standard requires 90 percent of all Title I schools that include grades 4 and/or 8 to meet State standards or make Adequate Yearly Progress in English language arts and mathematics. In order for districts under this procedure to make Adequate Yearly Progress, 50 percent of Title I schools must meet standards or make Adequate Yearly Progress in ELA and mathematics.

Using these criteria, there are three districts outside of New York City and 27 community school districts in New York City that have been identified as in need of improvement. These districts will receive technical assistance and support through the new Regional Support Services Network to raise student performance.

Attachment D: Accountability for Special Programs and Populations

In order to ensure that there are appropriate accountability standards for all institutions, the Department has developed special accountability provisions for a number of nontraditional educational schools and programs.

Alternative Accountability System for High Schools

The high school standards established by the Board of Regents are designed primarily to measure the performance of schools in which most students articulate directly from middle school to high school. The Department offers an alternative accountability system for high schools in which 50 percent or more are students that transfer from other high schools, or in which 50 percent or more are students with disabilities or in which 67 percent or more are at-risk students who articulated directly into the high school. This alternative accountability system allows any high school that meets one of these criterion to use supplementary performance indicators to best ascertain how successful the school is in educating its students.

Under this system, the school district and Department agree in advance upon a set of three supplementary indicators that will be used to determine whether the school will be considered farthest from State standards and a potential School Under Registration Review. A school participating in the program must submit its proposed indicators to the Department, agree to calculate them according to SED specifications, and include the results for the indicators on the school's report card. Examples of supplementary indicators are credit accumulation, high school completion rates, suspension rates, and attendance rates. Approximately 40 high schools, the vast majority of New York City alternative high schools, have petitioned to participate in the program for the next school year.

Accountability for GED Programs

In May 2000, the Board of Regents adopted regulations that established accountability measures for programs leading to the high school equivalency diploma for students under 21 years of age, effective with the 2001-2002 program year. These regulations require that GED programs demonstrate that sufficient percentages of enrolled students are either receiving their GED diplomas or are making adequate progress towards proficiency in English language arts and mathematics. Programs that cannot demonstrate success will be required to take corrective action and may have subsequent applications to continue operation of the program denied.

Following adoption of the regulations, Department staff conducted seven regional workshops to familiarize program directors with the new regulations and to alert programs regarding new data collection and reporting requirements. In May 2001, the Department sent a consolidated application to each GED program. The application reviewed the new program accountability requirements and provided the forms by which programs will report their results. Department staff plan to conduct seven additional

presentations in October and November to provide an update of the SASS system to operators of GED programs and to respond to questions and concerns.

Accountability for Educational Programs for Incarcerated Youth

In February 2000, the Board of Regents directed Department staff to work with the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) to develop accountability measures for incarcerated youth. The intent of this collaboration was for the OCFS and DOCS systems to develop accountability and supplemental performance indicators that would be used to annually review the effectiveness of the program at each site. The accountability standards would be consistent with those developed by SED for local educational agencies and BOCES. The Commissioner of Education would approve the system of accountability for OCFS and DOCS. The Commissioners of DOCS and OCFS would be responsible for the annual site review.

Over the past school year, Department staff have had a series of meetings with DOCS and OCFS staff to discuss implementation of accountability programs at their facilities. In the case of DOCS, the majority of inmates younger than 21 years who participate in DOCS educational programs are located in four facilities (Greene, Washington, Coxsackie and Monterey). For OCFS, a particular challenge in devising accountability standards is that the average length of stay is only nine months in less secure centers and 22 months in secure centers.

DOCS and OCFS facilities will be subject to the GED accountability system. In addition, SED anticipates that, beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, DOCS will pilot its version of SASS at its four primary sites. Discussions with OCFS are ongoing.

Early Elementary School Accountability System (SASS-E)

There are nearly 300 early elementary schools across the State that do not include the benchmark 4th grade testing year and therefore do not administer State assessments. Because of Federal and State stipulations that all schools be included in an accountability system, the Department has been developing a framework to address the issue of early elementary school accountability. Last summer, a statewide broad-based System of Accountability for Student Success - Elementary Component (SASS-E) Work Group was convened and given the charge of recommending a strategy for the uniform and objective measure of effectiveness in early grade elementary education. The resulting discussion addressed the practical challenges of documentation of learning in very young children, concerns about high-stakes testing and the enormous variations in developmental levels that are found within early grade classrooms.

The SASS-E Work Group developed several possible options for how early elementary schools could be included in the State accountability system. In spring 2001, Department staff held a series of forums across the State, which were attended by hundreds of representatives of the early elementary school community. A synthesis

of the discussions of these meetings and the Department's recommendations for early elementary school accountability will be presented to the Regents during the 2001-2002 school year.

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